

A little community which you have heretofore fostered—to whom you, and those who have preceded you, and those who sent you here to execute their will, have given repeated assurances that this City should remain the seat of Government unalterably, will not, I hope, be held up as a victim to be offered at any shrine! When I talk of a *pledge* from the people, I do not mean (I thought I had said otherwise with distinctness) that the *physical* power—or if you choose it, the *political* capacity, to violate these assurances had been surrendered, or had ceased to exist—Were it so, there would be no need of argument. I rest my cause upon the *moral* obligations which the people have created to act upon themselves. At this day, and in this country, *moral right* and *political power* should be synonymous. A promise deliberately made, is not less obligatory upon the conscience of a good man, because it may not be clothed with some legal form, or may not be capable of being enforced. No restraints of a different kind can be made to operate upon the *highest* sources of human authority. Communities of freemen must respect and maintain the obligations which are enforced by *moral* duty, or they cannot be virtuous, and will soon cease to be free.

The labor and ingenuity of gentlemen who have opposed this bill, have been unavailing to obscure these facts: 'That this City was an unimproved forest, when the Convention by direction of the people passed an ordinance in '83, by which they assured the public—by which at least they created the expectation that the seat of Government should be and remain here *unalterably*. It was intended so to act.—Who doubts it? None will deny that this assurance alone gave value to the property here—that the *State* bought the place for a resale, because it was known that she might profit from these promises of the people—and the public records prove that she speculated upon this confidence of her citizens, and realized a clear profit by it of 60,000 dollars! That this confidence of the citizens here has been increased by renewed legislative sanctions and by the deliberate declarations of *western* gentlemen, that the promises of the people would be preserved in good faith—And very many, nay, sir, so few are the exceptions, I may say all of the citizens have gone on to invest the avails of a life of honest industry in the purchase and improvement of your capital, until they have now become dependant upon the integrity of the State in this matter for the preservation of their comfort and prosperity.' Will you, for any cause however important, consent to ruin them? Can you hesitate whether these pledges ought to be maintained? The present occasion—the course of this debate, have required me to present these considerations to the notice of the House. 'Tis *pride*, not *truth*, which would prompt me to keep them back; and I prefer to follow the dictates of *truth*. Sir, it is no small matter to blast the happiness and blight the hopes of a *community*, and depend on it, the suffering you would produce, will not be diminished by the remembrance that their injuries came from the hands of the *State*. Though the present scheme may seem to operate only on